

DMM Safety Alert: Processing Plant Fire

In October 2008, a fire occurred at a sand and gravel processing plant causing approximately \$50,000 in damages. Fortunately, no one was injured and the fire was extinguished by the local fire department. The fire occurred as plant personnel were replacing a section of discharge pipe below a screen when sparks and/or hot material from a torch cutting operation ignited the rubber portion of the pipe. Workers unsuccessfully attempted to extinguish the fire with available water and fire extinguishers. The fire spread into the screen igniting the urethane screen decks and other rubber parts of the screen. The fire reached the feed conveyor above the screen before it was put out by the fire department. In order to avoid this type of potentially serious fire from occurring, the Virginia Division of Mineral Mining recommends the following:

When welding and cutting near combustible materials cannot be avoided:

- ✓ Use fire proof tarps or other materials to cover and protect combustibles.
- ✓ Have fire extinguishers of a size and type capable of putting out any fire that could be expected readily available.
- ✓ Assign someone to specifically watch for any fire that may start.
- ✓ Watch the area for 30 minutes after welding and cutting jobs are completed to ensure no fire is present.



Top arrow points out where cutting was taking place. Bottom arrow points out where fire started

When welding or cutting, precautions shall be taken to ensure that sparks or other hot materials do not result in a fire.
(4VAC25-40-620)